Exceeding with
Meager Means

SUCCEEDING WITH MEAGER MEANS.

Judges 3:31 And after him (Ehud) was Shamgar, the son of Anath, who smote of the phillistines 600 men with an ox-goad: and he also saved Israel.

Shamgar the 3rd Judge of Israel. A tiller of the soil and a laboring man. But because of his great deed with an ox_goad raised to high position.

Unsafe condition of Israel at this time. Deborah says,"In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath, the highways were unoccupied and the travelers walked thru byways". Shamgar was working in the field when 600 Phillistines appeared, and immediately Shamgar set upon them with the only weapon he had- his ox-goad. And so vogorously did he wield it that not a man escaped.

I. First we learn that poor tools are no excuse for bad work.

Shamgar used an ox-goad. Samson wielded the jawbone of an ass. David a stone and a sling.

Sometimes we think what wonders we would accomplish if we only had better tools, better equipment, better insturment Sometimes we say that if we only had more money how much more good we could do.

If we only had an assistant pastor, a paid secretary and a couple of parish workers what wonders we would perform for Christ in this community!

I believe that our text urges us to look at ourselves more and at our tools less. More than upon our equipment our success depends upon our spirit, our intelligence, our devotedness, our enthusiasm. What we need more than further equipment is to have our spirit aroused and to reconsecrate ourselves to the great cause of Christ.

Abraham Lincoln lived in a log cabin and had practical XX. no school facilities at his command, and yet, because of his indomitable courage and almighty spirit Lincoln gained the highest position in the land and crowned himself with immortal glory.

II.Our text also urges us to use what means we have at our disposal, however inadequate they may be.

Shamgar knew how to use his ox-goad. David knew how to shoot his sling. With Saul's armor and weapons David would have failed. What good would a more elavorate equipment do us if we did not know how to use it? If we are not accomplishing anything with our simpler tools with which we are familiar, it stands to reason that we would do no more with a more elaborate equipment.

III. Our text warns us never to make fun of the tools used. Look at the 600 dead men! Look at the slain giant! Look at the prostrate walls of Jericho! Look at the preservation of the Union and the freedom of the slaves!

The world laughed at the first few missionaries who went forth to Christianize the heathen lands.

How were the first temperance workers ridiculed! A little group of fanatics! What could a handful of women do? What could a lone fighter for temperance do if he were a Sam Jones?

We look back at our forefathers and see how they did things and we smile, looking with contempt at their poor tools and meager equipment and crude methods. We Americans travel about the world and laugh at those people who still use wooden plows and ox-carts and other crude implements. But I tell you that there are many people who are achieving more with their meager equipment and poorer methods than some of us who use tractors and automobiles and electric motors and irregating systems. By their harder work and greater courage and faithfulness to the task which is theirs they are doing more than some of us are doing.

IV. Our text calls our attention to the fact that sometimes great victories are won in the ace of great obstacles.

One man against 600! It has happened that in the great battle for truth and liberty one man has had to stand against the whole world.

But he who fights for the right has God on his side The Bible says:"All this assembly shall know that the Lord sayeth not by sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord s and he will give the enemy into our hands."

And again,"If God be for us, who can be against us?"

Sometimes we think that there are so few who are carrying on for Christ in our town and we begin to think Whats the use?. Why bother to teach this little handful of boys? Whay bother with that small group of girls? The parents dont seem to care much and the town cares less.

It is the samw with church. Why go to church? So few go. The real attractions are the golf links, the baseball diamonds, the foot ball games and the alluring highways to pleasure grounds. Why should we be serious when most people are having a good time?

Let me ~~to~~ remind you of the great pesson that history

3. teaches; namely, that many civilizations have been wrecked by the pleasure-loving crowds' and that many nations have been saved by the little handful of faithful one in them.

However struggling and meager and poorly attended our churches may be, their influence is doing more to keep our community life and social order in wholesome health and strength than all the police forces and penal institutions of the country. And this is not the boast of the churches, but the cold testimony of chiefs of police, judges, and heads of various institutions

Personally, I would rather be numbered with the faithful few who are conserving and building than with the crowds who are wasting and tearing down.

V. And lastly our text teaches us that we should not wait to secure the equipment that is officially and technically approved before entering the fight for the right.

Had not Shamgar entered the fight there and then, even tho he only had an ox-goad for a weapon, the chances are that Israel would have been further subjugated by the phillistines.

And many of us loose out by waiting for better opportunities instead of making the most of our present ones. Many of fail to do the good ~~not~~ we could do ~~it~~ by not pitching right in to do what we can regardless of meager equipment.

Jesus chose just 12 ordinary men for his disciples. He took what means he had at his disposal and fought against the powers and rulers for the salvation of the worl

The spirit and the courage of Christ should be ours today, in all our efforts to build the Kingdom of God upon earth.

Let us pitch in and do our level best, whether in the school, in the church, in the home, in politics, in the fields, in the store, in the factory, or whereever our station may be or whatever our equipment may be.